Bay-Delta Sport Fishing Enhancement Stamp Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2006, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Yolo Wildlife Headquarters

Attendees

Jim Crenshaw, Committee Chair John Beuttler, Committee Jim Edgar, Committee Carter Fickes, Committee There are not enough Committee members present to constitute a quorum.

Sonke Mastrup, DFG Dennis Lee, DFG Heather McIntire, DFG Rob Titus, DFG Jeff Rodzen, DFG Dennis DeAnda, DFG

Mike Riehl, Black Bass Action Committee Whitey Rasmussen, CSBA Cliff Rich, CSBA Craig Hansen, Fishery Foundation of California

Meeting Minutes

Page 3 - change "Sport dredging" to "Spot Dredging".

There are not enough committee members to form a quorum; therefore, the minutes will be voted on at the next meeting.

Action Log

- 14 Problems and opportunities within the BDSFES geographic range. Today Rob Titus will provide an update on the Central Valley Anglers Survey.
- 15 Status of Authorization. Today Sonke Mastrup will provide an update on our authorization to spend BDSFES funds.
- 20 Striped Bass Stamp Fund (SBSF) Update. To date, there have not been any additional meetings.
- 23 Ask the SBSF to release a press release. To date, there have not been any additional meetings.
- 24 Julie Oltmann's legislative update. There are no current updates.

- 35 Invite someone from budgets to talk with Committee. Today, Sonke Mastrup will provide a budget discussion.
- 36 Fisheries Advocate. This discussion is on today's agenda.
- 37 The Fisheries Advocate subcommittee discussion is on today's agenda.
- 38 When necessary, provide committee with activities near recommended projects. Not necessary today.
- 42- Reschedule budget talk. Today, Sonke Mastrup will have this discussion.
- 50 Add New Project Ideas to the agenda. Done.
- 54 Provide Committee with Central Valley Angler Survey budget: including other funding sources. On today's agenda.
- 58 Provide Committee with a financial overview at each meeting. This was included in your meeting packet.
- 60 Provide Committee with a copy of the Resolution Process before it goes to management. This was included in your meeting packet.
- 63 Determine how the Committee would hire a fisheries consultant. Contracting with a consultant is a common practice and it should not be an issue should the Committee choose to seek a fisheries advocate.
- 64 Add to the agenda discussion of the needs, role and job description of a fisheries consultant. This item is on today's agenda.
- 66 Add to agenda discussion of the DHS health warning signs.
- 67 DFG will seek a logo through competition. This contract request rerouted (by contracts) with the suggestion that we go through DFG's graphics design person first.

Warden Update

Sturgeon protection/enforcement has seen an increase in sturgeon activities. There are still illegal commercial sturgeon activities as well. The emergency regulations should go into effect around March 20 and will be in place for 120 days. At the end of the 120 days, the old regulations will go back into effect. There will likely be changes in the long-term sturgeon regulations through the 2007 sport fishing regulation change cycle.

There has been an increase in violations on the upper Sacramento River. There seems to be a major problem with people seining salmon smolts for bait.

In the Delta, there has been an increase in activities associated with pollution and habitat loss citations. There have been many warnings about the need for a BDSFES stamp and now wardens are citing anglers fishing without the stamp.

Many people have expressed frustration at calling CALTIP only to reach a message machine. Callers are not always called back unless they specifically

request a return call. If a message is for a violation in progress, immediate action is taken when wardens are available. Even if a warden does not immediately respond, the CALTIP information is useful. For example, if a warden receives a message that there is a violator at such and such place, looks like this and has a truck that looks like this – when the warden goes out, they will look at that location for that person. If a person violates once, they will likely violate again. CALTIP messages enhance the wardens' ability while on duty. Anglers need to call CALTIP....if you don't call, the wardens won't know.

There are only 300 wardens statewide. That is about 700 acres per warden per day. Last year, there was a budget line item for more money for DFG enforcement, but the Governor cut the funding with a line item veto. Unfortunately, wardens are retiring faster than they can be replaced and new recruits are often lured by significantly better pay from other enforcement jobs. The DFG needs more wardens and pay parity to keep them.

BDSFES Budget

The DFG is in the middle of the budget process. Over the last few years we have lost a large portion of our budget; our program dollars are down by 25 percent. DFG staff has decline severely over the last five years. The cost of doing business is going up.

The Governor gave us four million dollars to help the Preservation Fund, but six million from the General Fund goes to enforcement and six million from the non-dedicated Preservation Fund goes to hatcheries for the Cogdill Bill (AB7).

The DFG is regularly under funded. The Preservation Fund's dedicated accounts are flush except for the 1600 fund (Streambed Alteration Agreements). The non-dedication portion of the Preservation Fund has been over spent for years. The Department of Finance looks at the Preservation Fund's bottom line. When the Preservation Fund is looked at as a whole, it's in the red. The Department of Finance would not let us use the BDSFES Dedicated Fund because the whole Preservation Fund was not balanced.

The DFG budget is a "budgetary Winchester Mystery House". We are trying to simplify the budget through the reorganization. The reorganization puts all the fish people together, the wildlife people together, and enforcement is a straight-line chain of command and these are all an effort to make us more efficient and to simplify the budget.

The current budget eases our funding issues, but does not fix the problems. The Department of Finance is letting us move forward, but we are now the target in both the House and Senate. Angler groups can participate in this part of the process by contacting their representatives.

Budget hearings have started and we anticipate being grilled hard this year; however, it is an opportunity to air the truth. We cannot do the job they have asked us to do without funding. It should be interesting to see what happens. It is an election year and additional funding for "government" may not be popular. Simply stated, the DFG does not control the budget - we respond to it.

The BDSFES BCP has gone through the Department of Finance and is currently on the Governor's budget. Next, the budget will be debated in the legislature and then the budget will be subject to Governor review and potentially a line-item veto. If the budget is signed with our line item in place, we should have spending authority for the next fiscal year. It is important that the Committee move forward with project recommendations so we are ready when the authority is in place.

The DFG is shrinking and the legislature needs to provide fiscal responsibility. If the legislature needs a program implemented, then they need to provide spending authority and personnel for each law passed. We are unable to continue as we have in the past.

ACTION ITEM: Invite Sonke for a budget 101 presentation.

The sturgeon emergency regulations should go into effect in the next week or so (around the 17th). They are good for 120 days and at the time, the old regulations will go back into effect. Anglers have provided comments at several public meetings and they have suggested actions such as punch cards, tags, annual limits, and increased funding for enforcement.

Illegal take of sturgeon is a significant problem. The Director has asked that the BDSFES use some of its current spending authority to provide enforcement overtime to address illegal sturgeon issues.

The Advisory Committee expressed frustration that the DFG can get and use spending authority while projects recommended by the Committee do not happen in a timely manner. For example, prior to the formation of the Committee DFG committed \$286,000 annually to the Central Valley Angler Survey (a \$1 million program with a 75 percent federal grant). That program is already in place and has spending authority. Now, the DFG is asking for funding for warden overtime. The Committee would like to see how the warden overtime is used and how the money benefited the fishery.

<u>Sturgeon Protection</u> (Marty Gingras, DFG)

Sturgeon populations are cyclic and the cycles have been trending down. Current estimates show the white sturgeon population around 10,000 in the Bay-Delta system. DFG is concerned about the number of fish moving upstream to spawn. Not all females spawn every year and the number of females moving upstream could be very low.

The DFG decided to take precautionary emergency regulation change to protect sturgeon. The original proposal was to close the spawning grounds to all sturgeon fishing for 120 days. The Fish and Game Commission heard testimony from DFG and anglers, and suggested DFG host two public meetings for input. DFG received many comments written and verbal and most recommendations were for long-term management.

In the short-term (emergency regulations), the DFG looked at equitable and feasible alternatives. One, reduce the slot limit to 42" to 56" – reducing the maximum size limit. According to the length frequency data we have on white sturgeon, this slot would protect sexually mature fish and protect up to 50 percent of the population. In addition, the emergency regulation closed the green sturgeon fishery. The emergency regulation change should be in effect for 120 days which covers the sturgeon spawning period.

Now, the DFG must go through the formal regulation change process. There were an additional three public hearings to receive input on the long-term regulation change. We repeatedly heard about annual limits, a tag program, and a reduced slot limit. The DFG will look at these and other protective measures for the long-term regulation change. At the last Fish and Game Commission hearing, they recommended the DFG create a Sturgeon Fisheries Management Plan.

 ACTION ITEM: Have the Committee review the sturgeon genetics proposal prior to the next meeting.

<u>Central Valley Angler Survey</u> (Rob Titus, DFG)

The Central Valley Angler Survey is required by federal agencies to allow angling in the Central Valley. This program is new and has new staff. There are six permanent positions and 12 temporary positions to survey the Sacramento River. The Sport Fish Restoration Act (SFRA) funds seventy-fiver percent of this one million dollar program and the additional 25 percent comes from the Bay-Delta Sport Fishing Enhancement Stamp.

Currently, the program is finalizing the SFRA grant, pulling together equipment and personnel, coordinating facilities and coordinating with existing angler survey programs (striped bass monitoring, steelhead report card, ocean salmon, and salmon escapement programs). In addition, staff are evaluating the previous angler survey and preparing the new survey protocol. Initial evaluations have identified some emerging issues: steelhead and rainbow trout life histories, hooking mortality in juvenile steelhead and sturgeon.

This survey is tailored to Chinook salmon, steelhead, striped bass, shad and sturgeon in the Sacramento River and the Delta; however, data will be collected on all species caught.

March 9, 2006

<u>Sturgeon Genetics</u> (Jeff Rodzen, DFG Forensics Lab)

The DFG Wildlife Forensics Lab provides forensic support to DFG enforcement. They provide a variety of services and techniques. The lab can identify species from blood, meat, hair and feathers samples. They can match DNA samples of deer, elk and mountain lions. This is the first wildlife lab to validate DNA methods for court purposes in California.

The Wildlife Forensic Lab would like to request BDSFES funding for two sturgeon projects: DNA typing and lipid analysis.

The DNA typing could reveal DNA markers for individual sturgeon populations. Some DNA markers are already identified, but not enough for court purposes. This process could allow for the identification of whole fish, its meat and caviar sources (for example, this caviar is from a wild fish from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River system).

DNA markers are beneficial in many ways. They can be used to match blood and tissue samples, identify breeding populations, determine genetic differences between populations, and identify populations at risk of inbreeding

The DNA marker study would cost:

\$20,000 for development of genetic markers

\$147,500 for a 3130 Genetic Analyzer (equipment would last for years)

\$14,200 for a 9700 PCR cycler (x2)

\$ 30,000 for lab supplies and expendables

Total: \$184,700

Preliminary analysis suggests that lipid profiles could differ significantly between farm-raised and wild sturgeon caviar. DFG could potentially identify farm-raised and wild caviar. This study is very labor intensive and would require collection of eggs from ripe females from both farms and the Sacramento/San Joaquin fish populations. Then UCD would generate lipid profiles for each of the samples.

The lipid analysis study would cost:

\$30,000 UCD analyze 100 samples

\$3,000 75 caviar samples

\$15,000 Gas Chromatograph for the Wildlife Forensics Lab

\$10,000 Organic extraction hood for the Wildlife Forensics Lab

\$7,500 for supplies travel and expendables

Total: \$65,500

In addition, the Wildlife Forensics Lab has requested \$64,920 for two scientific aids for two years.

DNA Marker Study -\$184,700

Lipid Analysis- \$65,500 Scientific Aids - \$64,920

Grand Total for all projects: \$315,120.

Health Warning Signage (May Lynn Tan, Department of Health Services)

The Department of Health Services has created a health warning sign for consuming fish in the bay and delta. They have about 300 of the large signs and they plan to post them at boat launches and shore access points in Yolo, Solano, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Contra Costa counties. This is a pilot program.

- ACTION ITEM: E-mail Committee members and ask if they would like to post signs and if so, how many would they like to have.
- ACTION ITEM: Invite May Lynn to the next meeting to bring signs for Committee members to post.
- ACTION ITEM: Add to next agenda would the Committee like to print additional health warning signs on their own?

Fisheries Consultant

Tabled until next meeting.

 ACTION ITEM: See if the head of the fish salvage program will come to the next meeting to discuss the acclimation program.

New Project Ideas

None

New Business

- ACTION ITEM: Can we spend Central Valley Angler Creel money on our projects?
- ACTION ITEM: What projects that we have on hand can we swing this fiscal year?
- ACTION ITEM: Add to agenda bylaws and attendance.
- ACTION ITEM: Legislative budget review to ensure no language has changed on how we can spend the money.
- ACTION ITEM: Add to agenda SDIP discussion led by John Beuttler.
- ACTION ITEM: Invite Dan Odenweller to talk about his striped bass work.

| | ACTION ITEM | Invite Tom Cannon to discuss his striped bass work. |
|---|--------------|---|
| • | ACTION ITEM. | invite for Carmon to discuss his striped bass work. |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |